THE

TOILET, &c.

No. II.

SATURDAY, January 24, 1801.

HINTS ON CONVERSATION.

Teaching we learn, and giving we receive.

THE loquacious and verboſe are more intolerable, than the mute and unſocial; but affability and well timed remarks are ſeldom unfortunate in their effects. There have been numberleſs ſtrictures on the vileneſs of calumny and detraction, which have generally repreſented every friendly circle as profeſſedly formed for theſe uncivil purpoſes. But, I am ſo far an admirer of my own times, and acquaintance, that I am ready to fancy myſelf enjoying the unſullied ſweets of reaſon, among my friends, without hearing a ſlanderous liſp, or witneſſing that peeviſh weakneſs, which levels the gentleman with his groom.

No one is ſo totally abſorbed, in the purſuit of gain, or pleaſure, as not, at times, to ſigh for a quieſcent retirement. And very few, in the moſt turbulent and fanciful ſeaſon of life, amid the jarring incidents which are ever happening to diſturb and perplex, have furniſhed their minds with materials for complacent, conſolatory reflections. Nor is the power of well choſen books always adequate to this ſoothing office. Converſation alone ſeems perfectly calculated to fill the vacuity between the more ſolid amuſement of reading and buſineſs. The ſallies of imagination produce the ſame

pleaſure in the hearer, as that which brought them forth ; being uttered in the ſame language which the thoughts at firſt dictated, without the aid of pedantic poliſh. Sentiments flowing from the lips of a friend, appear, as they are, the honeſt effuſions of unaffected ſincerity.

Frequent and informal intercourſe with our friends, inſpires a confidence and familiarity, which enable us to profit by their good ſenſe, good humor, and improvement. Whereas, the quarterly viſits of a ſiſter, or any other near relation, ſerve only to exhibit paintings in the parlour, and to utter a few reſerved phraſes, which naturally tend to make ſtrangers ſtill more ſtrange.

Topics in general or particular caſes, are not to be pointed out by any dictator, however wiſe. They are the offspring of chance, and of each other ; and the ſociety, who require a nomination of a ſubject, will generally be found inadequate to the diſcuſſion of any. If we are capable of enjoying a comfort on earth, it muſt ariſe from a temper able to rejoice in the honeſt ſucceſs of others, in knowing and ſeeing them happy. The means of proſperity being generally within the reach of all, ought not a judicious and ſucceſsful exerciſe of theſe to excite our eſteem for the worthy and faithful agent, whoſe upright induſtry has done honor to the ſociety of which he is a member ? What excuſe then, can any one frame, for admitting any other feelings, than thoſe which happify himſelf, and which exert all their influence to diffuſe felicity to others ?

In converſation, we have the torment, or peace of mind of each one preſent, completely at our own diſpoſal. A look, a wink, or an untimely ſmile may give a ſting to ſenſibility, which the moſt ſolemn proteſtations to prove our innocence, in vain would endeavor to heal.

Thoſe, who will the moſt readily feel the juſtice of this remark, will, I am ſenſible, be the laſt to fall into this ungenerous error. It is nugatory and unſatisfying to be told, that thoſe who can wantonly diſturb our comfort, are beneath every thing but general contempt; for the cruel and ſtupid multitude cannot be fought ſucceſsfully with mental arrows. So that relief is no where attainable, but in conſcious rectitude and merit. And nothing can be ſaid, or done, to reform theſe deſtroyers of human happineſs, but thoſe things, which will increaſe their brutality. We muſt, therefore, ſhun the aſſaſſin, and in ſecret, lament over his ill breeding.

THE *FEMALE OBSERVER*,

NO. I.

READING has the pleaſing power of diſpelling the gloom of anxiety, alleviating domeſtic cares, and agreeably filling up the liſtleſs and languid moments of life. It is, therefore, with wonder and regret that I obſerve this uſeful and elegant amuſement to be ſo much neglected by my ſex after marriage.

Is it ſuſpended under an idea of having made ſufficient literary attainments already, and of having no uſe for additional knowledge? The human mind, it ſhould be remembered, is deſigned for progreſſive improvement.

The different periods of life, and ſtages of action require various cultivation and direction. The kind of reading adapted to the taſte and capacity of miſs in her teens ſhould give place to the more ſolid ſubjects, which are intereſting and important to riper years. Properly to diſcharge the ſucceſſive duties which are allotted us,

as we advance in life, it is neceſſary that we have recourſe to the experience of others. Experience has taught thoſe who have gone before us many uſeful leſſons, of which we may be ignorant. Theſe are communicated to us through the medium of the preſs; and at once invite our attention, and offer us entertainment and aſſiſtance.

The mind of ſenſibility muſt be ſeriouſly impreſſed with the obligations which are inferred upon the miſtreſs of a family by the conjugal, parental, and other domeſtic relations. Why then ſhould the ſoothing aid of books be overlooked or deſpiſed? Many who have appeared fond of reading, in youth, no ſooner enter the married ſtate, than they lay it wholly aſide. For this neglect the want of time and the preſſure of more neceſſary avocations are uſually alleged. I believe, however, there are few, very few indeed, who have no leiſure moments at command. Are there not many hours, in the intervals of buſineſs, the receſs of diverſion, and the languor of inactivity, which might be employed in this rational entertainment? Perhaps ſome more inſignificant paſtime might be ſuſpended; perhaps an hour in the morning, or evening might be ſpared from ſleep, and devoted to the acquiſition of new and uſeful ideas, relative to the part we are called to act: or, poſſibly, a triflng converſation might ſometimes be avoided for the ſake of furniſhing our minds with materials to appear reſpectable in our ſocial intercourſe.

Might not the pain of ſlight indiſpoſitions be greatly alleviated, if not entirely removed by this occupation of time? The celebrated Gangenelli remarks that "we are often indiſpoſed through idleneſs. Many women," ſays he, "are ſick, without knowing where their com-

plaint lies; becauſe they have nothing to do. They are tired of being too well. And this ſatiety is oppreſſive to people of faſhion." In this caſe, at leaſt, an entertaining and inſtructive book would prove an efficacious ſpecific.

Have we families of children? How grateful muſt it be to unbend the mind after the labor of attending and inſtructing them, by the peruſal of an author, calculated, at once, to pleaſe and improve. This relaxation, by increaſing the fund of our information, will qualify us to render the moſt eſſential ſervice to our riſing offſpring, a conſideration to which no mother can feel indifferent.

Even while nurſing an infant, a book, at hand, may afford uſeful hints, without infringing on the tender taſk.

Are we ſurrounded by a multiplicity of cares? What has a more happy tendency to tranquilize the mind, and calm the agitations, which an anxious and active life occaſions, than a recourſe, at the intervals of reſt, to the philanthropic, moral, or chriſtian ſentiments of a judicious and elegant writer? Such effuſions of genius and virtue combined, enliven and recruit the exhauſted ſpirits, while they greatly extend our acquaintance with the world we inhabit, and give us juſt and comprehenſive views of our own deſtination.

It is not uncommon for ladies in the eaſy walks of life to complain of the tedioufneſs of time, and in appearance, at leaſt, to deem every moment which is not engroſſed by ſomething exhilerating to the ſpirits, to be totally loſt! Hence a giddy round of unmeaning diverſions is conſtantly purſued, and the inſupportable hours of neceſſary retirement are moſt aſſiduouſly diminiſhed!

But how greatly would it contribute to the enjoyment even of gay life to occupy thoſe moments which are too frequently the vacation of the mind, by reading and reflecton ? Few would complain of diſcontent and *ennui*, if they properly improved their time, and wiſely provided themſelves with mental nutriment, as a reſource in the abſence of lighter and leſs ſubſtantial food. Reading has, for thoſe who are in the meridian of life, peculiar advantages. When the judgment is matured, diſcretion will point out the moſt uſeful and intereſting ſubjects ; while that prudence which ought to characteriſe the matronal progreſs will regulate the ſeaſons of indulgence. At this ſtage of life, time is a treaſure which ſhould be uſed with the ſtricteſt economy. While, therefore, we cultivate a taſte for books, we ſhould be ſure to "part with no moment but in purchaſe of its worth." A judicious eſſayeſt* obſerves, "that perſons advanced in life, or laboring under ſickneſs and infirmity have an unqueſtionable right to amuſe themſelves with whatever can innocently alleviate their evils, and enable them to paſs away the lagging hours in ſweet and tranſitory oblivion. Their reading, like their diet, may be light, and more adapted to tickle a ſickly palate, than to afford ſolid and ſubſtantial nouriſhment. But in youth, health, and vigor, who would voluntarily be confined to the weakneſs and inſipidity of water gruel ? It is, indeed, lamentable to obſerve perſons who have leiſure and fondneſs for reading, devoting their time and thoſe abilities, which might render them valuable members of ſociety, to ſuch books only as tend to diſſipate their ideas and vitiate their morals."

* Knox.

CHARACTER OF DOCT. *PAYSON.*

PHILLIPS PAYSON, Son of the Rev. PHILLIPS PAYSON of Walpole, Maſſachuſetts, was educated at Harvard College : and in the year 1754, received the honors of that Univerſity.

He was ordained the *Miniſter* of *Chelſea*, *October* 26, 1757, and continued to preach and perform all the duties of the miniſtry till a few weeks before his death.

In the line of his profeſſion he had a diſtinguiſhed reputation. His imagination was lively and vigorous. His memory retentive. His diſcourſes were well compoſed and evangelical. Like a wiſe maſter builder he looked at the foundation, while reaſoning upon the moral duties, or deſcribing with a glowing pencil, the triumphs of the chriſtian's hope.

The diploma of Doctor in Divinity was preſented him by the ſeminary *where he received his education*, a real teſtimony of his wiſdom and worth, which gave pleaſure to the friends of religion and learning.

He had much claſſical erudition, and a fondneſs for the ſtudy of natural philoſophy and mathematics.

When the American Academy of Arts was inſtituted, he was one of the firſt members. He always ſhewed a zeal to promote the cauſe of ſcience and every uſeful inſtitution.

He was a member of the ſociety for propagating the Goſpel among the Indians and others in N. America ; and alſo one of the Scotch Commiſſioners for the like benevolent purpoſe, being named in the commiſſion, when the board in Scotland eſtabliſhed a correſponding board in this country.

Doctor Payson was frank and open in his diſpoſition, and had a ready utterance in converſation. With uncommon energy of expreſſion he pourtrayed vice and meanneſs, tore the garb of the hypocrite, and expoſed fanaticiſm in every ſhape.

In his domeſtic and ſocial relations he appeared with dignity and tenderneſs. As a companion was agreeable, and as a neighbor obliging; warm in his friendſhip, hoſpitable in his houſe. He was a condeſcending and inſtructive parent; the kind, attentive and affectionate huſband.

He was ready to every good work for the benefit of his people, mixing with them and intereſting himſelf in their concerns: he encouraged the ſpirit of induſtry in the town, and upon proper occaſions adminiſtered the conſolations of religion. Their attachment increaſed with his years. But while they were indulging hopes of returning health, and days of further uſefulneſs, they beheld him, with grief and ſorrow, among the trophies of the grave.

A well adapted Sermon was preached in the meeting houſe, and every reſpect paid to his remains by the inhabitants of Chelſea and the neighbouring places.

The Editor thanks Phocion for his "timely advice;" yet he

"——*ſets it down*
"*That one may ſmile and ſmile, and be a villain.*"

Lyricus was more fortunate in imagining his *ſubject*, than his *figures*; the one *might* have been well treated, the other *muſt be*, before they can *walk out*.

Edwin's ballad addreſſed to his "Miſtreſs' eye-brow," will ſuffer nothing from a week's ſeaſoning. Zigzag's ramble next week.